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ABSTRACT

Guidelines to assist local school authorities in the development and implementation of an emergency preparedness program are provided in this booklet. The first part describes the stages and components of an emergency preparation program, some of which include response organization and control, school closing and reopening, communication, evacuation/dispersal/shelter, transport, and first aid. The next part discusses the need for implementing training programs for personnel and for including education programs in the curriculum. Assessment and public relations are discussed in the final sections. Appendices contain a list of school authorities' responsibilities, a plan for emergency school closure, an emergency plan outline, and a suggested letter to parents. (LMI)

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GUIDELINES

for Emergency Preparedness in Schools

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Manitoba Association of School Superintendents,
Souris Elementary/Collegiate, and
Woodlands Elementary School.

GUIDELINES FOR

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS IN SCHOOLS

These guidelines have been prepared to provide local school authorities, such as school divisions and school districts, with assistance in the development and implementation of an emergency preparedness program. Final responsibility for decisions related to school emergency programs remains with local school boards. Professional advice and assistance in all aspects of emergency preparedness is available from the Manitoba Emergency Measures Organization.

Emergency Preparedness

To deal appropriately with emergency situations, it is necessary to identify the types of hazards that may threaten the school and take steps to eliminate them or mitigate their effects. The local school is best equipped to effectively develop and implement its own emergency preparedness plan. A completed plan should contain planning, educational and practical components.

The immediate physical safety of students and staff should take priority during an emergency. Plans should discuss first aid, evacuation and the continued safe care of students until they can return home. Students must also be taught the procedures to follow in an emergency and trained to participate in the specific plan.

An effective emergency preparedness program should include emergency education and provide students with an opportunity to study the various types of emergencies that could affect their school or community.

It is also important to involve parents in the school plan and to communicate the need for their support in its implementation.

A suggested allocation of emergency preparedness responsibilities for school authorities is detailed in Annex "A".

THE EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM

The first step in a program is the development of a school board policy. It is suggested that a team of elected officials and staff be designated to complete this task through the formation of an Emergency Preparedness Committee.

The second step is implementation at individual schools. One person at each school should be designated responsible for the development and implementation of a plan. The Emergency Preparedness Committee should assist in preparation of each individual plan, including the education and training components.

Each plan should be reviewed and approved by the school board prior to implementation.

Response Organization and Control

It is anticipated that each school division or district will participate in the development of an overall municipal strategy for emergency response. During an emergency, a school board's response should be integrated with the powers granted to municipal councils under the Emergency Measures Act.

At the school level, the principal, staff, teacher and student relationship is well suited to the needs of the emergency response and control structure. Therefore, every effort should be made to utilize existing organizations and procedures. The exercise of emergency responsibilities should be considered an extension of day-to-day responsi- bilities.

Specific duties should be assigned to each member of the staff. These responsibilities should be allocated with regard for each individual's specific abilities and normal sphere of work. Individual assignments might include transportation co-ordinator, information and media co-ordinator, and liaison with the community emergency response co-ordinator.

An emergency control centre should be designated and its location should be well known by staff and students.

School Closing and Reopening

Emergency school closing procedures should be established and approved by school boards. Their implementation should be co-ordinated by Superintendents. Such procedures should be shown in an annex to the plan.

The reopening of schools should only be actioned when the local school board is satisfied that the emergency or potential emergency has ended.

The emergency closing and subsequent reopening of schools should be adequately publicized in the local media.

Communications/Warning

The existing school communications facilities will normally be adequate for emergency purposes. A clearly understood system of communications must be utilized, including distinctive warning signals or messages. The system must be capable of reaching all parts of the school and grounds.

In the event of power failure or loss of the internal communications system, alternative arrangements such as personal contact between control staff and teachers; the use of loud hailers; or other methods of maintaining contact between levels of authority should be considered.

Evacuation/Dispersal/Shelter

Both evacuation and shelter arrangements should be designed to care for the students, regardless of temperature or weather conditions. The plan should cover the deliberate dispersal of students to their homes in case of imminent danger, as well as their evacuation in the event of a sudden emergency.

If the situation permits, it is considered desirable to dispatch children to their homes. Planning should include a telephone fan-out system involving parents and including alternate arrangements for pupils whose parents are normally at work during the school day. An example of a telephone fan-out system is contained in ANNEX "B".

The available warning time might restrict dispersal to only those children living in close proximity to the school, or it may preclude any form of dispersal. Every school should therefore make plans for shelter areas in school buildings and in homes and buildings near the school. The following steps generally outline the shelter/dispersal planning that is recommended:

a. Survey the school and immediate vicinity to identify dispersal/shelter areas and note those with meal and accommodation facilities.

b. Select and map out areas suitable for shelter and dispersal. If these areas will not accommodate the school population, make plans and arrangements for the use of outside facilities.

c. Assign pupil groups to shelter/dispersal areas and plan assembly and evacuation procedures.

Transport

Transport arrangements should provide for the continued availability of school buses or other transport during periods of severe weather or potential emergencies. Arrangements may also vary according to season, as warm weather periods may allow more flexibility.

Other community sources of public, private and commercial road transport should be surveyed and appropriate contact arrangements made with respect to their availability and use in time of emergency.

Health/First Aid

Basic procedures for obtaining emergency health and first aid assistance should be publicized and well understood by staff.

Maps/Diagrams

Maps and/or diagrams, shown as annexes to the plan, can be extremely useful to illustrate aspects of the plan such as:

- the school's emergency response structure
- warning/reporting procedures
- location of shelters and dispersal areas
- evacuation routes

Emergency Contact List

A list of key emergency response personnel and resource contacts with their telephone numbers (business and home) is recommended as an annex to the plan. As such, it can be readily amended and updated without requiring changes to the basic plan.

Co-ordination with Community Plan

School plans should be co-ordinated with those of the communities in which the schools are located. This is particularly important since the initial warning for outside-the-school emergencies and disasters must come from local municipal authorities. In addition, there must be co-ordination of the use of limited emergency services and other resources in the community.

Emergency Plan Format

There is no single plan format that can be considered the only answer to school emergency planning requirements. However, a suggested format is outlined in ANNEX "C". This outline is not intended to be a definitive model, but more of a reminder of the kinds of items that should be considered for inclusion in school emergency plans.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION PROGRAM

Training Program

School staff should be trained to perform their assigned general or specific tasks within the emergency plan. First aid training should be provided for all staff and cardio-pulmonary resuscitation (CPR) training should be provided to selected personnel. The Emergency Measures Organization is available to provide information and assistance in arranging and implementing training programs.

The implementation of the emergency plan, either in an actual emergency or in a drill or exercise, is the single best way to train personnel in emergency response functions.

Education Program

Just as the emergency planning and training program should be an ongoing activity of the school, the emergency education program should also be an integral part of the school curriculum. The following subjects are considered to be informative and related to the emergency preparedness program:

a. Natural emergencies and disasters such as floods, forest fires, tornadoes, snowstorms and epidemics.

b. Human-made emergencies and disasters such as structural fires, explosions, dangerous goods accidents, radiological accidents and road, rail and aircraft accidents.

c. Protective measures to mitigate the effects of emergencies and disasters.

d. Meteorology and weather warning systems.

e. Peaceful uses of nuclear energy and radioactive materials.

f. Fire prevention and the chemistry of fire extinguishing.

g. Community organizations responsible for health and safety - fire, police, health, ambulance and public utilities.

h. The community emergency response plan.

The Emergency Measures Organization can provide, or arrange for, the provision of information and assistance in implementing an emergency education program.

ASSESSMENT OF EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS

A school emergency preparedness program can only be evaluated by the effectiveness with which it accomplishes its purpose. Emergency plans should be put into operation and tested under circumstances simulating different types of emergency situations that are likely to arise. The education program should include, where feasible, tests or quizzes to reinforce knowledge about emergencies and what can be done to mitigate their effects.

The evaluation of these programs will indicate if changes are required in plans, and what additional training and education is necessary to increase the overall standard of emergency preparedness.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Parents and teachers should be informed of the necessity for emergency preparedness.

When all those directly connected with the school (i.e. administrators, teachers, parents and pupils) have been familiarized with the aims and methods of the program, they can help to obtain the support of the community. Specific information should be sent home to acquaint parents with the progress of the school program for safe-guarding their children. A suggested letter to provide this information can be found in ANNEX "D".

Parent-teacher meetings and radio and television programs can also be used to inform parents. Parents should be kept well informed to ensure public confidence in the school's emergency preparedness program.

The public relations benefits of the school emergency preparedness program are many. Parents will be relieved to know that plans exist to provide their children with the highest possible degree of protection and that it is not necessary for them to rush to the school when warnings sound. Teachers will also find that in this, as well as in other school programs, parents can make a valuable contribution if they are kept informed.

CONCLUSION

When an emergency preparedness program is presented as a continuing community activity, its significance as part of everyday living will become evident and young people will begin to understand why they must continue to be concerned with this issue.

Children who develop an awareness of the value in being prepared for emergencies, are more likely to meet them calmly and realistically. Furthermore, their influence in family groups can have a highly beneficial impact on the overall emergency preparedness of the community.

ANNEX "A"

SCHOOL AUTHORITIES
EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS RESPONSIBILITIES

The responsibility for protecting children at school rests with school authorities. Since each school system has its own specific operational procedures, only a general allocation of functions can be suggested here.

a. **The School Board should:**

- Establish an Emergency Preparedness Committee.
- Issue school division policy regarding school emergency preparedness and contingency planning.
- Review and approve school emergency plans and related programs.
- Budget for emergency preparedness program.
- Secure competent legal advice concerning the status of school personnel and school property in time of emergency and during drills and exercises.

b. **The Secretary Treasurer/Superintendent of schools should:**

- Make recommendations to school board.
- Initiate and co-ordinate the emergency preparedness programs in the school division.
- Communicate policy decisions to local schools.
- Be informed about municipal emergency preparedness and ensure emergency planning co-ordination with local authorities.
- Organize required curriculum planning and in-service training for teachers and other related personnel.
- Review progress in emergency preparedness programs and stimulate any further activity that may be required.
- Contact the Emergency Measures Organization for assistance in preparing and implementing an emergency preparedness program.

c. **The Principal of the school should:**

- Initiate and supervise the planning and implementation of an emergency preparedness program for the school.
- Establish a local emergency preparedness committee.

- Delegate emergency responsibilities to staff with regard to their special abilities and normal service functions.

- Arrange for emergency preparedness materials for classroom instruction.

- Arrange for selected teachers to secure in-service emergency training.

- Arrange for outside lectures and presentations.

- Keep the superintendent informed regarding emergency preparedness in the school.

- Inform parents about the school's emergency preparedness program and the evaluation of its adequacy.

- Be familiar with the community emergency response plan and utilize its information in the development of the school plan.

d. The Teachers should:

- Participate in the development of the emergency preparedness program for the school.

- Participate in faculty studies leading to adaptations or revisions of the curriculum and an instructional program to meet the needs of emergency preparedness.

- Provide instruction in the school's emergency preparedness programs.

- Integrate recent and pertinent emergency preparedness data into regular classroom instruction.

- Instruct students to develop confidence in their ability to take care of themselves and help others during an emergency.

- Be prepared to provide activities and leadership for children during periods of enforced confinement.

- Become familiar with minimum first aid procedures.

- Become familiar with the psychological basis for working with children under the stress of emergency situations.

- Maintain records of vital data for all students and have such records readily available.

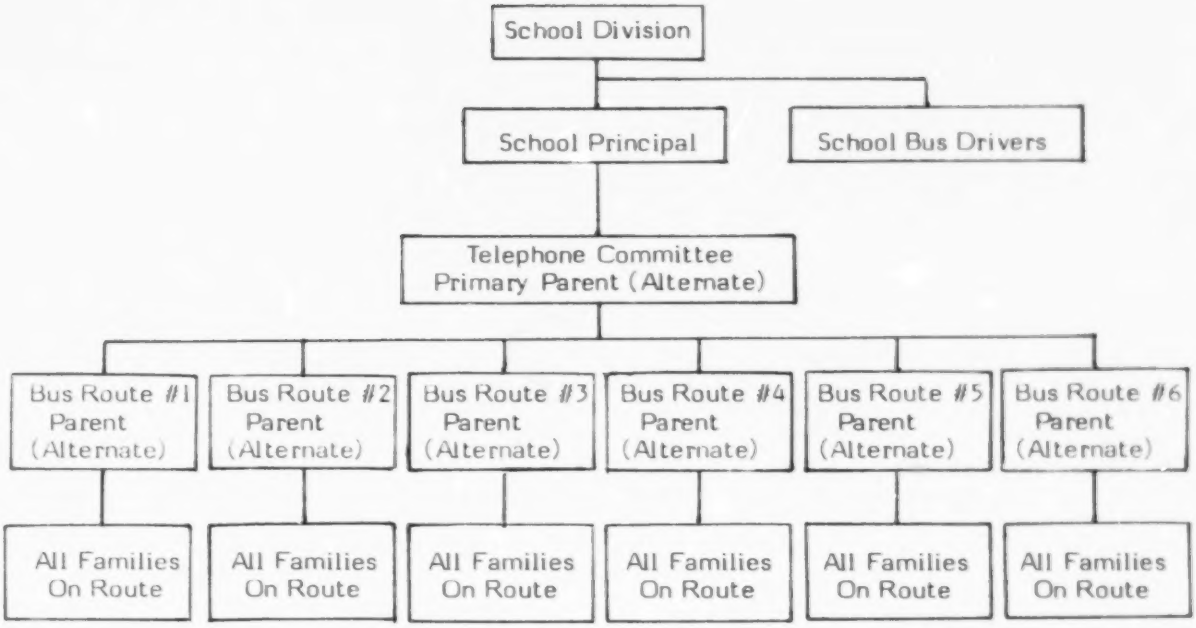
e. Other School Staff should:

- Participate in the development and implementation of the emergency preparedness program for the school.

- Become familiar with procedures necessary to carry out assigned emergency functions.

EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSURE

(SNOW PROGRAM)



Procedure:

1. School Division notifies schools and all bus drivers.
2. Principal calls primary parent or the alternate responsible for telephone fan-out.
3. Primary parent calls bus route parents or their alternates (one parent per bus route).
4. Bus route parents call each family listed in sequence on their assigned bus route. Where no response is received, the preceding parent is recalled and requested to meet the bus and take temporary responsibility for the children of the absent family.

ANNEX "C"

PLAN OUTLINE

General

The purpose of this emergency preparedness plan is to ensure that the health and safety of students and staff at local schools is adequately protected in the event of an emergency. This plan, along with emergency education and training, comprises the essential elements of the emergency preparedness program.

Aim of Plan

To protect the health and ensure the safety of students and staff in the event of emergencies or disasters.

Authority

This plan has been approved and authorized by . . .

Emergency Response Organization

- Response organization is . . .
- Control staff will consist of . . .
- Responsibilities of the control staff are . . .
- Emergency Control Centre located at . . .

Communications System/Warning

- Public address system will be used for emergency announcements.
- Special warnings are . . .
- Emergency announcements will be made by . . .
- Action in the event of power outage will be . . .

Emergency School Closing & Reopening Procedure

- Procedure is as follows . . .
  (If procedure is too lengthly, describe it in a separate annex.)

Emergency Procedures for Fire/Explosion

- Procedures are contained in Annex . . .

Emergency Procedures for Snowstorm

- Procedures are detailed in Annex . . .

Emergency Procedures for Bomb Threats

- Procedures are outlined in Annex . . .

Emergency Procedures for All Other Emergencies

Procedures for all other emergencies will be as for fire or snow- storm. If specific procedures are required for other emergencies, they should be contained in additional annexes.

Evacuation Routes/Dispersal and Shelter Areas

- Evacution routes are shown on the map (diagram) in Annex . . .
- Dispersal and shelter areas are shown on the map in Annex . . .
- Instructions concerning specific evacuation and shelter areas for designated student groups will be given over the public address system.

Transport Arrangement

The Transport Co-ordinator is responsible for . . .

Information/Media

The Information/Media Co-ordinator is responsible for . . .

Emergency Contact List

A list of essential emergency contacts is contained in Annex . . .

ANNEX "C"

EMERGENCY CONTACT LIST

NAME	TELEPHONE NO.
Principal	
Vice Principal	
Transport Co-ordinator	
Information/Media Co-ordinator	
Other School Staff	
Superintendent	
Secretary-Treasurer	
Police	
Fire	
Ambulance	
Hospital	
Community Emergency Co-ordinator	
Radio/TV Station	
Newspaper	
Shelter Area(s)	

ANNEX "D"

SUGGESTED LETTER TO PARENTS

The following letter has been designed to acquaint parents with the emergency preparedness program in schools and to enlist their support.

Since conditions vary in different localities, a letter written for one community may not be appropriate for another. In preparing such letters, consideration should be given to the size of the community and school; types of persons and general characteristics of the community; and the objectives of the letter.

This letter is only a suggested model of what might be used when corresponding with parents.

Dear Parents:

In accordance with the government's emergency preparedness policy, we would like you to be aware that every possible precaution is being taken to ensure the safety of your children. We are co-operating very closely with our local authorities and the Emergency Measures Organization in this activity.

Each school has prepared and implemented an emergency preparedness program which is designed to teach your children about emergencies and disasters. The program includes an emergency plan which provides for dispersal of pupils to their homes when circumstances permit, or for their retention at school or evacuation to alternate shelter when the situation warrants.

If emergency warning time is sufficient, children will be sent home. Otherwise, they will be retained at school until conditions indicate that it would be safe to return to their homes.

The school emergency plan was developed by the school's Emergency Preparedness Committee, through consultation with local Emergency Measures authorities.

It is our sincere hope that a disaster will never occur, however the implementation of the emergency program will help ensure the health and safety of your children under all anticipated emergency conditions.

Principal